



The VALENTIN Family
of St. Clair, Perry and Jackson Counties

Submitted by:

Robert L. DOWNEN
4009 Terrace Dr.
Annandale, VA 22003

George VALENTIN was born at Gross Umstadt (near Frankfurt), Germany on May 23, 1835, the eighth child of Georg Adam VALENTIN and Anna Margareta WIRWAZ. Two older brothers, Adam VALENTIN (born 1818) and John Daniel VALENTIN (born 1829) came to the United States (St. Louis and St. Clair Co., Ill.) in the 1840s. The father, a blacksmith and a Lutheran, decided in 1850 to bring his young son, George, to the United States, after the mother died in July of that year. George and his father crossed the Atlantic Ocean, arriving at the port of New Orleans and traveled up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, where they soon moved on to St. Clair County. Both took their citizenship oaths in St. Clair County in 1856, five years after their arrival, when George was 21 years old. Although we have no record of the death of the father, Georg Adam, he was living in the vicinity of Marissa at the time of the 1860 federal census, at the age of 68 years.

On their emigration to America, the VALENTIN family brought several heirloom items with them which survive today, including a pewter goblet, a handcarved woman's brooch, a braided watch fob made from the hair of George's mother, and an old engraving of the family town of Umstadt. The elder brother Adam remained in St. Louis as a veterinarian and family tradition says that he personally attended Gen. Ulysses S. GRANT's horses. He died about 1876. The brother, John Daniel, married Lisetta BRAND in St. Clair County in 1851 and they later relocated to Pinckneyville, Ill. John was a blacksmith and Americanized his name by adding an "e" to the end of VALENTIN. He died in 1898.

On March 18, 1858, in St. Clair Co., Ill., 23-year-old George VALENTINE took as his bride Marie HELMS, daughter of Henry HELMS and Dorothea BRUNS of St. Clair County. Marie had been born at Gronau, Germany (near Hanover) July 22, 1835. She emigrated to the United States with her family in 1852; Henry HELMS purchased a large farm at "Turkey Hill" near Freeburg in St. Clair County.

With only modest means, but much energy and determination to sustain them, George and Marie VALENTIN embarked upon life together in St. Clair County, probably near Belleville. George labored as a farmer and occasional blacksmith/veterinarian, skills learned from his father and brothers. Family tradition says that he provided some service during the Civil War, perhaps as a veterinarian, although no documentation of formal military enlistment has been located.

About 1865 George VALENTINE moved his family from St. Clair County to Perry County, near Denmark, Ill. There, he was initiated into Free Masonry in 1872. Fifteen years later, in 1887, the family moved to Ava in Jackson County, where George served as a justice of the peace. Marie VALENTIN died at Ava Sep. 2,

The VALENTIN Family of Southern Illinois

1895. George lived with a daughter until his death at Ava April 25, 1902. Both are buried beneath a marble monument at Evergreen Cemetery, Ava, Ill.



George VALENTIN (1835-1902)
and Marie HELMS VALENTIN (1835-1895)

The first child of George and Marie was born in St. Clair County on Feb. 12, 1861; this was Rosa and she was to marry Louis FIEDLER of St. Clair County about 1880. They raised four children, George, Edward, Bertha and William, near Freeburg, Ill. Rosa VALENTIN FIEDLER died in March 1942.

The second child of George and Marie VALENTIN was Augusta, born July 16, 1865. She married Duke DURKEE and they lived at Ava, where Augusta VALENTIN DURKEE died April 16, 1941. They had no children.

The third child of George and Marie was Henry August VALENTIN born Dec. 5, 1866 in Perry Co., Ill. He married Barbara Ellen KELLER Aug. 3, 1892 at Ava, Jackson Co., Ill. They raised five children near Ava: Mae, Lela, Anna, Fred

The VALENTIN Family of Southern Illinois

and Louis. Anna married Virgil DOWNEN and lived at Murphysboro, Ill. Louis married Helen UNDERWOOD and lived at Wichita, Kan. Henry A. VALENTIN died at Murphysboro, Jackson Co., Ill., Dec. 18, 1933.



Henry A. VALENTIN (1866-1933)
and Barbara E. KELLER VALENTIN (1872-1938)

The fourth child of George and Marie VALENTIN was John Edward, born Sep. 2, 1868. He died unmarried on Nov. 6, 1906, after a farming accident, despite an emergency operation conducted by a country doctor on a kitchen table.

The fifth child of George and Marie was William Mohlenbrock VALENTIN born Feb. 4, 1873 in Perry Co., Ill. William was a life-long school teacher in Southern Illinois and a veteran of the Spanish-American War. He died unmarried on Dec. 17, 1945 at Marissa.

The sixth child of George and Marie VALENTIN was Bertha Jane, born July 15, 1875. She married Alvin BRADLEY in 1900 and they raised three boys: Theodore, Calvin and Clyde. Two daughters died in infancy. Bertha VALENTIN BRADLEY died at Murphysboro, Ill., Nov. 16, 1950.
